Prices of Essential Commodities

6610. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been soaring prices of all Essential Commodites including drugs under free market sales;

(b) whether meagre quota is allotted under Public Distribution System;

(c) whether the Government propose to fix a ceiling prices for such items of free sale;

(d) if so, the main features thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) Out of the selected 30 essential commodities, the variation in the Wholesale Price Indices was steady/negative in respect of 15 commodities for the months of February, 92 and upto Mar. 21, 92. In case of other 5 commodities it was less than +0.5% and in case f remaining 10 commodities there was an increase. A statement showing the percentage variation in the wholesale price index numbers of essential commodities during February, 92 and March 92 (till 21.3.92) is attached.

(b) The allocation of foodgrains from Central Pool for distribution through PDS has steadily been increasing since 1989. The total quantity of foodgrains allocated in 1991 was 21,3 million tonnes compared to 17.8 million tonnes and 16.7 million tonnes in 1990 and 1989 respectively. From August, 1991 till November 1991, ad-hoc increase in the allocation of foodgrains was made by the Central Government. Keeping in view lean season for kharif cereals. This itself shows that there has been improvement in the allocation of foodgrains. Allocations of foodgrains is supplemental in nature and is not intended to meet the total demand of the States/UTs. Allocation of levy sugar is generally made on a uniform norm of 425 gms. per capita monthly availability to the projected population as on 1.10.1986. The Central Government allotted a 5% ad-hoc increase in the levy sugar allocation to States/UTs. from August, 1991 till March, 1992. The allocation of imported edible oil under Public Distribution System has since been resumed.

(c) No. Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) It is not possible to fix ceiling price of all essential commodities available in the market. Governemnt's policy aims at making the selected essential commodities available at reasonable prices throughout the year. However, Government fixes the issue prices of commodities supplied through Public Distribution System. Open market prices of commodities are being influenced by various factors including their demand and supply. Government keeps a close watch on the price behaviour of all essential commodities and takes appropriate steps from time to time.

STATEMENT

Percentage Variation in the wholesale price index numbers of selected essential commodities during February. 92 and March, 92 (till 21.3.1992)

Sl.	*Commodity*	*February 1992*	*March (till 21.3.92) 1992*
1.	Rice	+ 2.6	Steady
2.	Wheat	+ 3.7	- 1.9
3.	Jowar	+1.8	+1.7
4.	Bajra	+4.0	+5.8
5.	Gram	1.4	+1.3
6.	Arhar	+2.7	-2.4
7.	Moong	+2.9	+2.7
8.	Urad	-0.2	-1.7
9.	Masoor	-8.1	-5.7
10.	Potatoes	-26.0	+7.2
11.	Onions	-17.7	+9.3
12.	Milk	-0.6	Steady
13.	Fish	+3.0	-2.4
14.	Mutton	+2.6	+1.7
15.	Chillies (dry)	-4.5	-2.8
16.	Tea	-2.5	+1.9
17.	Coke	Steady	Steady
18.	Kerosene	+0.5	Steady
19.	Atta	+2.8	+4.0
20.	Sugar	+6.9	+0.1
21.	Gur	+0.3	+0.1

Sl.	*Commodity*	*February 1992*	*March (till 21.3.92) 1992*
22.	Salt	+0.8	+2.8
23.	Vanaspati	-2.4	-3.4
24.	Mustard oil	5.2	-2.8
25.	Coconut oil	4.6	-2.9
26.	Groundnut oil	6.0	-2.9
27.	Cotton Cloth (mills)	+0.3	+3.6
28.	Laundry Soap	Steady	+0.6
29.	Safety Matches	Steady	Steady
30.	Drugs & Medicines	+0.1	+1.1
	ALL COMMODITIES	+0.4	+0.6

Note: Figures are provisional.

Strategy to conserve Power

6611. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering any strategy to conserve power;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to give fiscal incentives to industries in his regard; and

(c) if so, to what extent industries will be able to conserve power by virtue of these incentives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): (a) The Government has formulated a comprehensive strategy for conservation of electric power and other energy resources such as petroleum and coal.

(b) The Government has been providing fiscal incentives to encourage energy conservation in the industrial sector. These incentives include 100% depreciation allowance admissible under the Income - Tax and Customs & Excise Duty relief on the cost of energy saving devices and equipment.

(c) The extent to which industries will be able to conserve power by virtue of these incentives cannot be quantified. However, the fiscal inventives extended by the Govt. will create an environment conducive for accelerated investment by industries in energy conservation programmes.

Legal Protection to Clear the Backlog

6612. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Govement propose to